

NEOTROPICAL BEETLES

MR. W. C. HARRINGTON, a retired petroleum geologist, recently donated another very valuable lot of beetles to the Academy's Department of Entomology. This new collection of approximately 1,000 specimens was made by Mr. Harrington in the remote state of Salta, Argentina, and in southern Bolivia. Mrs. A. C. Pehrson, preparator for the Department of Entomology, is at work mounting and labeling this fine addition to our South American holdings.



WILLIE THE OCTOPUS—OR IS HE?

AN OCTOPUS alleged to be named Willie is now looking at the public with a suspicious eye from tank 31 in the Steinhart Aquarium. Perhaps we should say that Willie is alleged to be an octopus, because after the excitement of introducing him to aquarium life, watching him pulsate and change color alarmingly as though likely at any moment to slough off this mortal coil, Aquatic Biologist Robert P. Dempster discovered that Willie has only seven arms. Counting the arms of an octopus is something of an art in itself, because they don't hold still while you count. Curator J. L. Kask called for a recount but it came out just the same. No evidence that an arm had been lost through accident. Just seven arms—no more, no less. Does that make Willie a septopus?



DR. HANNA OFF FOR ALASKA

ON MAY 28 Dr. G. Dallas Hanna, the Academy's Curator of Paleontology, departed by airplane for Southeastern Alaska, where he plans to spend two months in a scientific reconnaissance of Dall Island, an uninhabited island on the north side of Dixon Entrance. The island was named after William Healy Dall, late Curator of Mollusks in the United States National Museum.



CONFERENCE ON SARDINE INVESTIGATIONS

A CONFERENCE of scientific workers interested in problems relating to the sardine fishery along the west coast was held at the Academy on May 28, 29, and 30, and was continued on June 2 to include discussions of oceanographic equipment and procedure. The meetings were attended by more than twenty marine biologists and oceanographers from California, Oregon, Washington and British Columbia.

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CALIFORNIA LANDSCAPE

Photograph by Lionel T. Berryhill

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June Announcement

THE JUNE MEETING of the California Academy of Sciences will be held in San Diego, California, in conjunction with the twenty-seventh annual meeting of the Pacific Division, American Association for the Advancement of Science, June 16-21, 1947.

Three members of the Academy's staff are represented on the program of the Pacific Division. On Monday afternoon, June 16, Dr. J. L. Kask, Curator of Aquatic Biology, will participate in the Divisional Symposium with a paper entitled "Who Harvests the Pacific?" On Tuesday afternoon, a paper entitled "High Seas Fishery Research in the Eastern Pacific" by Dr. W. M. Chapman, Curator of Fishes, will be read on the program of the Oceanographic Society of the Pacific. This paper will be read by Dr. Kask in Dr. Chapman's absence in Europe. On Thursday morning, June 19, Dr. R. C. Miller, Director of the Academy, will present a paper entitled "Behavior as a Factor in Speciation" before a joint session of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, the Western Society of Naturalists, and the Herpetologists League.

A short business meeting of the Academy will be held on Tuesday afternoon, June 17, at the conclusion of the program of the Oceanographic Society of the Pacific. Meeting places will be designated in the printed program of the San Diego meeting, or can be learned at the Registration Headquarters in the U. S. Grant Hotel.



GARDEN CLUB AIDS ACADEMY LIBRARY

THE SAN FRANCISCO GARDEN CLUB several years ago raised a fund of \$1200 by personal subscription and presented it to the Botany Department of the California Academy of Sciences in memory of Mrs. William Hinckley Taylor, the founder of the Club. Use of the interest was left to the discretion of Miss Alice Eastwood, Curator of the Department of Botany.

The income from the fund to date has amounted to \$473.21. Miss Eastwood has selected three botanical books of exceptional beauty and interest as being peculiarly appropriate to the memory of the beloved founder of the Garden Club. The "Monograph of the Genus *Lilium*" by Elwes is a handsomely bound two-volume folio with hand-colored plates, published in 1880, with a supplement by Grove published in 1933. "A Study of the Genus *Paeonia*" by Stern, a more recent work, is likewise a beautifully illustrated volume.

NEWLY DISCOVERED CRYSTAL EXHIBITED

A SPECIMEN of Brazilianite, the most recently discovered variety of crystal, is included in the new exhibit of crystals recently installed as a part of the William B. Pitts Collection. Mr. Pitts, who is Honorary Curator of Gem Minerals at the Academy, states that this new crystal was found in Brazil last year by an expedition under the auspices of the American Museum of Natural History and the Smithsonian Institution.

In the new exhibit of types of crystal Mr. Pitts has assembled specimens of everything from amethyst to zircon. Crystals are shown in their natural state and as cut into finished gems. A diamond in its matrix was obtained from Pike County, Arkansas, the only place in the United States where diamonds are mined.



BATS IN OUR BELFRY

WELL, maybe not exactly, because we haven't got a belfry. But anyhow we have bats. That little story in last month's NEWS LETTER that Dr. Robert T. Orr, Curator of Birds and Mammals, had returned from San Luis Obispo County "with a number of birds and mammals for the Academy's collection" can be set down as a classic of understatement. What Dr. Orr returned with was, among other things, fourteen live bats belonging to four different species. There were fourteen, that is, at the first count. While Dr. Orr and Miss Mary Lou Perry, Assistant in Mammalogy, were debating whether you could keep bats in an aviary or did the aviary thereupon become a battery, the situation was becoming more and more complicated. Four of the lady bats give birth to twins.

Now a grown-up bat is nothing to brag about for looks; but a bat-infant is really astonishingly unattractive. Naked and blind, with its little wings folded around it and, strange to say, a mouth full of tiny teeth, a baby bat is something only a mother could love. In fact, one of the mothers couldn't take it and committed infanticide (assault and battery, Miss Perry says). Considerable effort was made to rear the others, as they are interesting, however homely. When two of the mothers proved unable to nurse their young, Miss Perry tried hand-feeding them with a bit of sponge soaked in milk. The tiny bats were so transparent she could see the milk inside them and tell when they were full; but notwithstanding this advantage the hand-feeding proved unsuccessful. One member of the fourth pair of twins also succumbed, but the surviving youngster is now several weeks old and doing fine, and the Department of Birds and Mammals is learning lots about bat development and behavior.

In case you don't know it, baby bats travel with their mothers, holding on with teeth and claws—quite literally hanging on for dear life while mamma goes batting around after insects. It seems about as safe as riding on the outside of an airplane; but lots of little bats live to grow up.